

## **Special meeting of the European Council**

### **Saturday, 30 August in Brussels**

*EU heads of state or government will meet on 30 August for a special meeting of the European Council on the **appointment** of a new President of the European Council and a new EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.*

*In light of the latest developments, leaders will also discuss international developments, in particular the situations in **Ukraine, Iraq and Gaza**.*

UPDATED Indicative programme:

<i>from 15.15</i>	Arrival of participants
<i>17.00</i>	Exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament and the President-elect of the European Commission
<i>followed by</i>	Exchange of views with President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine
	Family photo
	Working session
	Working dinner of heads of state or government
<i>Time TBC</i>	Press conference

[Invitation letter](#)

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## **Appointments**

Heads of state or government are expected to elect the next President of the European Council and appoint the next High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The next President of the Euro Summit is also due to be appointed.

The role of the European Council President is to chair the European Council, ensuring the preparation and continuity of its work. He also acts as a consensus-builder within the European Council and ensures the external representation of the Union at his level and on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy. According to the Treaties (Article 15.5 TEU), he or she is elected by the European Council by qualified majority for a period of two and a half years, renewable once.

The current President, Herman Van Rompuy, was appointed on 19 November 2009 and took office when the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009. His first term ran until 31 May 2012. On 1 March 2012 he was appointed for a second term starting on 1 June 2012 and ending on 30 November 2014.

The High Representative chairs the Foreign Affairs Council, is responsible for coordinating the EU's common foreign and security policy, and contributes to the development of that policy. The High Representative is also a Vice-President of the Commission and ensures the consistency of the Union's external action.

The European Council appoints by qualified majority, and with the agreement of the President of the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Article 18.1 TEU). His or her term of office is five years, in line with that of the other Commissioners.

The High Representative, the Commission president and the other members of the Commission are subject, as a body, to a vote of consent by the European Parliament. On the basis of this consent, the whole Commission will finally be appointed by the European Council, acting by a qualified majority.

EU leaders appointed Catherine Ashton as High Representative in November 2009. She is due to step down when the term of the current Commission ends on 31 October 2014.

## **Ukraine**

Heads of state or government are expected to discuss the situation in Ukraine, in the light of the latest developments, following the meeting of European Council President Van Rompuy with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on Saturday morning.

The Foreign Affairs Council on 15 August expressed growing concern at the worsening crisis in eastern Ukraine and its humanitarian impact on the civilian population. To achieve rapid and tangible results in de-escalation, it urged Russia once more to put an immediate stop to any form of border hostilities, in particular to the flow of arms, military advisers and armed personnel into the region, and to withdraw its forces from the border. The Council also noted that the grounds for imposing restrictive measures against Russia, i.e. the illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of Ukraine, remained valid and that it continued to assess these sanctions, ready to consider further steps in light of evolutions on the ground.

For more details, see [Council conclusions](#) of 15 August, and [factsheet](#) on EU-Ukraine relations.

## **Iraq**

EU heads of state or government are due to debate the latest developments in Iraq, including the situation of Christian communities and other religious minorities and the issue of foreign fighters.

On 15 August, the Foreign Affairs Council reiterated the EU's firm commitment to Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It voiced extreme concern at the dire humanitarian situation and the massive displacement of civilians, recalling the substantial efforts by the EU and its member states to provide humanitarian aid. In this respect, the Commission has recently announced an increase in aid to Iraq, bringing total EU humanitarian funding for Iraq to € 17 million in 2014.

The Council condemned in the strongest terms the attacks perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and associated armed groups and welcomed the decision by individual member states to provide military material to the Kurdish regional authorities, as requested. The EU has welcomed the nomination of a Prime Minister-designate and expressed its continued support for the constitutional process.

For more information, see [Council conclusions](#) of 15 August.

## **Middle East (Gaza)**

Leaders are also expected to address the situation in the Gaza Strip.

The EU has welcomed the ceasefire agreement in Gaza and called on all parties to respect it. The recent Foreign Affairs Council reminded that the situation in Gaza has been unsustainable for many years, insisting that a durable ceasefire must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions in the Gaza Strip through the lifting of the Gaza closure regime and it must end the threat to Israel posed by Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza. The Council reiterated the EU's readiness to contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable solution enhancing the security, welfare and prosperity of Palestinian and Israelis alike. Options for robust EU action following a ceasefire are currently being developed.

The resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. The EU's objective is a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel in peace and with secure and recognized borders.

For more details, see [Council conclusions](#) of 15 August.

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